A

FREE CONFERENCE

Touching

The preſent STATE

OF

ENLAND

Both at home and abroad:

In order to the DESIGNS of

FRANCE.

LONDON,

Printed by *E. T.* for *R. Royſton*, Bookſeller to the Kings moſt Excellent Majeſty. MDCLXVIII.

Mary Woodward

Whitehall the 21. *Jan.* 166$\frac{7}{8}$.

Let this Diſcourſe *be Printed.*

By the Appointment of the Right Honourable the Lord Arlington, *His* MAJESTIE'S *Principal Secretary of State.*

Joſeph Williamſon.

A FREE CONFERENCE

Touching

The preſent STATE

OF

ENLAND

Both at home and abroad:

In order to the DESIGNS of

FRANCE.

LONDON,

Printed by *E. T.* for *R. Royſton*, Bookſeller to the Kings moſt Excellent Majeſty. MDCLXVIII.

TO THE READER.

THIS *Conference being imaginarily Scened, and yet really performed out of the Treaſure of a very great Miniſter of State's Capacity; it was thought fit to be publiſhed now, and not before, becauſe that reſpect ought to be pay'd to the Secret of his* Majeſtie's *Affairs, ſo as nothing ſhould anticipate the* King's *own labours, to give the people ſatisfaction in his due time touching the tender care that He is graciouſly pleaſed to take of all his*

Subjects in point of Honour, Safety, Freedom, Union, and Commerce: which nothing could more advance than the Concluſion of the Treaty *newly made betwixt* England *and the* States *of the* United Provinces; *which without flattery may be demonſtrated to men of underſtanding to aim at nothing but the Good of his Subjects in general, exempt from all manner of private Intereſt whatſoever. Bleſſed be God then that it is ſo happily concluded; and that we have a* KING *whom nothing can ever alienate from the true Intereſt of his* Realms, *nor no corrupt Counſellour (let him be thought to be never ſo powerful or crafty in order to his own Advantages) prevent the Wiſdom and the Integrity of ſuch a* Prince *from prevailing above all the Artifices and Frauds of thoſe who*

who would perſwade the Nation, (were they competent Maſters of their Art enough ſo to do) that thoſe Counſellours who are not intereſted can be leſs prudent or ſucceſsful than ſuch as did make it their buſineſs to appropriate all to themſelves, and nothing to their Maſter. The French King *is much commended for his Parts and Activity: but let us ſee him outdo the* King *of* England *in this particular of the* Treaty, *both in courage and conduct, and then I ſhall be apt to attribute his Grandeur as much to natural Abilities as extraordinary Fortune, but not before.*

A

FREE CONFERENCE

Touching

The preſent State of *ENGLAND*,

Both at home and abroad:

In order to the Deſigns of *FRANCE*.

THE Adventure which happened unto me lately is of ſo extraordinary a nature, and contains ſo many important Diſcoveries in relation to the publick Good in its Progreſs, that I ſhould prove defective towards my Countrey, if I did not candidly publiſh all the Paſſages, both touching the Occaſion, and the Effects of what followed from this Accident.

Know then, that a Peer of the Realm of *England*, and one whoſe Merit, Quality,

lity, and the Place which he holds in the Adminiſtration of the Affairs of the Kingdom are remarkable; did invite ſundry of his Lordſhip's beſt friends to a magnificent Feaſt, and amongſt the reſt he had the kindneſs not to omit me out of the number: where the excellence of the Chear which he made to his Gueſts, after a moſt noble manner, put the whole Company into ſuch a refined humour of converſing together, that the Entertainment was but one intire pleaſing Debate, how to expreſs our compleat enjoying of each other. I was not wanting with the uttermoſt of vigour and ſolace to uphold the Genius of this Conference. But as the freeſt ſpeakers do commonly come by the worſt in diſcourſe, and are the ſooneſt expoſed to enterfiering laſhes; I found my ſelf to be attacqued in ſo many places at once with the ſwiftneſs of other mens reaſons and wits, who held the oppoſite Arguments, that although I were ſomething heated, yet there remained unto me preſence of mind enough (and ſucceſs of Intervals) to get inſenſibly out of the Preſs, whil'ſt the

the Diſorder and Confuſion laſted, (which is uſual at ſuch Meetings) into another Room. I retired then, purſuing the opportunity, into a fair Gallery, which ſurpriſed my eyes with the rich Ornaments wherewith it was furniſhed; but not without trouble neither, and a Curioſity beyond the Opticks of the place, which increaſed there; ſo as I was diverted from any farther conſideration of the Furniture, becauſe the place ſeemed to lie too near the Enemy, to dwell any longer upon thoſe Objects. Wherefore I went into another Chamber hard by, which inſtantly filled me with new Apprehenſions, by the means of ſeveral large Looking-glaſſes hanging on the Walls, which ſhewed me my own proper Figure at length on every ſide, and from thence imprinted in my wounded Imagination as many Adverſaries as there were angular Reflections out of each Mirrour; that appeared to purſue me ſo furiouſly, that I ran on violently with my head forwards, in order to ſome Eſcape, to the door of another Chamber adjoyning thereunto, which opened with

with ſuch reſiſtence, when I thruſt againſt it, as if it had been forced with a Petard: And thus falling in the attempt, I was ſo ſtunned, that it was a good while after before I could come to my ſelf again. But at laſt having partly recovered my ſpirits, I was ſurpriſed with a freſh aſtoniſhment, as much amazing me as the former had done that I repeated: For when I began to open my eyes half way, finding that till then they had been altogether unuſeful to me, I attributed the diſorder to want of Sight, often feeling, in regard of the darkneſs of the Room, to try whether they were ſtill in my head or not. Yet perceiving, betwixt diſcerning and doubting, that all I eſſayed of this kind was to no purpoſe; after I having deplored the bitterneſs of an imaginary loſs, I groped on more and more in the dark, until I chanced to come to an *Alcone*, where feeling with my hands I took faſt hold upon the *Alcone*, and graſped the pillar of a Bed, which had I not lighte upon, I muſt have fallen the ſecond time. For, thruſting hard againſt one of the

the Poſts, the Counter-ſtroak of the Wood threw me all along into the middle of a Couch, where I remained ſtretched forth like a Coarſe without any motion, in the ſame poſture of a precipitate Swoon. And then it was that the vapours of my body, which were diſturbed by the firſt miſtake, confuſedly did ſtir through all the parts in the agitated fluctuancy of a ſtorm; though by degrees growing to be undeceived, Sleep, which appeaſeth all the Mutinies in humane creatures, did naturally and more agreeably ſeiſe upon my Faculties, and compoſe the Tempeſt with perfect tranquillity of Mind and animal Operations, as if I had never been ſo diſcompoſed. 'Tis impoſſible to tell you how long I continued in the ſtate of this *Interregnum* betwixt life and death, nor what care the Company took to learn what was become of me, but in vain; blaming me for having left them, or rather the War begun, uſing all ſorts of means to find where I was, and bring me back to the Combate.

I ſhall only tell you by the way, that about

about Sun-ſet, a great noiſe was raiſed by two of the ſervants of the Houſe, who entred ſuddenly into the Chamber where I lay; which aſſured me as I awakened that I was yet living; and the blazing of the Wax-tapers, which they ſet upon the Table and Cup-boards, made me extreamly joyful at the reſtauration of my ſight, which in my opinion till then was abſolutely gone from me. But then a third apprehenſion ſeiſed on my Powers, firſt, to be catched in ſuch a Poſture, and expoſed to the innocent jeaſts which might be made by the Gueſts on the ſubject of my ſtrange Diſorder, and precipitated Flight from them. But as I ſought my eyes once more, to ſteal away out of this Society for all night, and not be ſeen by any body, another noiſe obliged me to keep cloſe where I was upon the Bed, and draw the Curtains home, not to be diſcovered. I was not long in this Concealment, when I ſaw come into the ſame place three Perſons, whoſe Deſerts in this Relation muſt be better known than their Names, and the importance of their Intereſts in the State, by what I am going now

now to ſay of thoſe particulars, becauſe I am ſtrictly obliged not to reveal them. Theſe Strangers the Maſter of the Houſe did very civilly introduce into the Chamber, who without many Complements ſate down on the ſeats which were prepared for them near the Table. My Sleep had digeſted thoſe Fumes, and diſſipated all the Clouds of my Underſtanding: therefore judging that the Cauſe that aſſembled ſuch great Perſonages together there in this ſecret Entertainment could not be but of the higheſt importance; both the Curioſity, and the ſhame of having them witneſſes to my Diſorder, obliged me to keep firm to my Poſt, within the cover of the Bed, and to lend an attentive ear to all their diſcourſe. For the Maſter of the Houſe began the Overture of the Conference in the terms following.

In that part which we do hold of the Government of the State, it is not enough that a ſincere Amity doth link us in one band of Intereſt and Eſteem particularly to each other, if we be not alſo united in the ſame Judgment as to all which concerns

concerns the publick Good. In our former Conferences we uſed to take juſt meaſures how to rectifie things *within the Realm*; but now it reſts with us to agree upon ſome Maxims which are to be maintained in regard of *Forreign matters*, to the end that in theſe Rencounters, wherein we are to give counſel, we may act in all things with a perfect Concert: which no doubt will give a great weight to the Reſolutions which ſhall be formed thereupon and the preſent Caſe; ſince never have any Counſellours treated of nicer Points, nor more ſerious ones than thoſe which are to be debated among us to day. The Fire is already kindled in our Neighbourhood; the Monarchy of *Spain* is juſt upon the brink of falling to the ground, if it be not ſuccoured; and *France* in a condition to avow the vaſt Deſign which that Crown hath long meditated, as well againſt the Peace of *Europe* as the Commerce of our Navigations, if a powerful Fence be not quickly made, to keep the *French* within their Bounds. Wherefore all the reſt of the Forces of *Europe* ſtand at gaze, expecting

ing the Reſult of what *England* doth determine herein, conſidering us as the Counter-balance, which time-out-of-mind hath held the ſcales even betwixt thoſe two Great Monarchies, for the ſafety of all the reſt. They wait but our giving of the Sign to joyn with us in the common Defence: and the better ſhare of them ſeek it from *England*; and the others have their eyes open towards our Conduct, to take their meaſures alſo by no other model but what we ſhall trace out unto them.

There is no need of a Providence extraordinarily enlightened, to judg which is our true Intereſt in this Conjuncture; but the preſent ſtate of our Affairs doth not leave us the ſame facilities to follow it, in which we do abound as to the knowledge thereof.

Mean-while the Miſchief preſſes forwards, and doth not afford place nor time ſufficient to expect a benefit of other Viciſſitudes, which run ſufficiently againſt us; nor to Regulate our Reſolutions by thoſe Events, which take too impetuous a part in the Cauſe on that

ſide which we ought moſt to fear. Therefore it is more than ſeaſon to form our fundamental Maxim, on which all our Conduct is to move in this preſent Conjunctures; and at this very Inſtant decide, whether we will chuſe to be ſimple Spectators, or take ſome part to act in this Tragedy: ſince the Reſolution which we ſhall fix thereupon will be the Center, from whence we muſt draw all our Lines afterwards. Which is the proper Point that we are to diſcourſe of now among our ſelves here, before we do give our Opinions on the whole matter to the Publick; and in which particular I deſire the rather to be enlightned by your wiſe Reaſonings, by how much the more I am aſſured, That the ſole Good of the State is the only Rule and Object of all your Counſels.

As ſoon as ever he had uttered theſe words, one of the Three, after caſting down of his eyes, and pondering what he was to ſay to the reſt, with having thought before he adviſed, began his diſcourſe thus:

If late Experience had not taught us enough

enough to our coſt, that it is much eaſier to begin a War than ſucceſsfully to get out of it when once it is commenced, I would enlarge my ſelf on that Subject, to repreſent unto you piece by piece the Dangers, Incommodities, and Loſſes which ſuch a Reſolution uſually doth carry along with it; where frequently the Conquerer finds he is more charged with Debts than with Trophies, and the people alwayes have cauſe to mingle their Acclamations with Tears, in the courſe of ſuch expenſive Triumphs; ſince before any Edifice is begun, the Dimenſions how to ſettle a ſolid Foundation to undertake the War upon, ſhould previouſly be conſidered, by meaſuring our Means and Forces as well as thoſe of the Enemy with whom we are to fight; and the like touching their Power, whoſe Intereſt we intend to embrace.

Our Forces and Means you all know are already exhaſted with long and ſharp Wars, both at home and abroad; and by the Hand of God, which hath been heavy upon us in the late *Peſtilence* and in the *Firing* of the City of *London*:

Wherefore 'tis but now that we begin by the means of Peace to breathe again; which Peace alſo is not firmly eſtabliſhed. Time then is requiſite for us to take breath and recover in, after ſo terrible an Agitation: nor can any thing be ſo dangerous unto this State as a Relapſe in the midſt of Amendment. If the noiſe of our Neighbours doth awaken us, our Wearineſs likewiſe invites us to ſeek ſome Repoſe: and in caſe there be danger to ſuffer the Growth of a ſuſpected Power, there will not be leſs peril in the checking of that power unprepared. You know, as well or better than I can tell you, the Condition of the Revenue, and the exceſſive Expence of this Realm, which inevitably muſt carry the War from home, unleſs we mean ſupinely to be deſtroyed: and therefore of neceſſity muſt our Wings be ſuffered to grow again after this clipping, before that we do offer to make a new Flight. You cannot be ignorant too, that Commerce i the Soul & the Life of this Kingdom, which is the Chanel from whence the Abundance of it flows: And the Wealth

Wealth which we formerly enjoyed, and rendred us ſo conſiderable in the World, beſide the freſh Experiment of the Diſorder and Interruption which the War brought into all the Traffick of the Land, hath made us clearly ſee, that for Merchant-mens Fleets to be changed into Naval Armies, and the Subſtance of the people melted into Magazins unuſefully, which might more profitably be imployed in rich and gainful Navigations, cannot be the proper Intereſt of *England.*

If we conſider the preſent State of *France*, We ſhall find that all the reſt of *Europe* bows under that Power; and thoſe who are the moſt concerned to ſuccour *Spain* bleed at the Noſe only, without being able to break the Impoſtume within. The Intelligences of *France* and their practices make their way every-where, either with Bribes or by Addreſs; Victory waits ſtill on all their Motions: and by having redreſſed the Abuſes of their Exchequer, they have laid an unexhauſtible foundation of Money within themſelves. Over and

above that, the *French* are a Nation, or rather a Seminary of Nobility and Souldiers, ſo verſed in the trade of War, as this proviſion puts them in a Poſture never to be ſavingly juſtled.

I grant, Their Deſigns are Vaſt, and their Pretenſions ill-grounded: but how can we take cognizance of that? are we Knights-errant, to expoſe our lives in the revenging of other mens Quarrels? The large interpoſition of Sea, which divides us from the reſt of the World, may ſhelter us enough from their Attempts, without founding of our ſafety upon the Conſervation of our Neighbours.

But ſuppoſe we had ſuch an abundance of Charity to ſpare, as to hazzard our own ſafety in favour of another's; we ſhould at leaſt be ſecured beforehand, that when we are at a ſecond Charge of ſucconring them, it might prove profitable unto them; otherwiſe the miſchief being grown to that point of Extremity where now it reſts, all inſignificant Remedies of this nature would but anger them the more to no pur-

purpoſe. And *Spain* being deeply engaged in the War of *Portugal*, which is alone able to give the *Spaniards* work enough, as the *Spaniſh* Counſels ſtand divided, and according to the ſlowneſs of their Operations, their Treaſure being exhauſted likewiſe, and the principal places of *Flanders* in the hands of the *French*, and thoſe which remain unconquered hardly in a condition to make any Reſiſtance when they ſhall be attacqued, which diſpoſes that Crown to ſeek a Peace with *France* on any terms; and the Propoſitions in order to a League offenſive and defenſive with them, which they make to us, being tendred only to *England* as a wily Lure to oblige the *French* to conclude it the ſooner, out of an Apprehenſion that we may reſolve to aſſiſt *Spain*; why ſhould we raſhly, I pray, thruſt our Sickle into this blighted Corn?

Indeed, when Inconveniences are viſible on all ſides of the Proſpect of ſuch Treaties, the wiſeſt Counſel ſure is to ſuſpend the Reſolution awhile. For on which part can we place our Intereſt

thus, without incurring blame juſtly? The Party of *Spain* is weak and unlucky; that of *France* is unjuſt, and contrary to our good: ſhall we then ſacrifice our ſelves for *Spain*, which for three years together hath ſtood Idle, with their arms folded a-croſs, without ſo much as proffering to help us, whilſt three of the greateſt Powers of Chriſtendom let one another Bloud, and thus were only Paſſive in our Ruin? Muſt we then joyn with *France*, which were ſo lately combined with our Enemies to deſtroy us, and that tore the Victory out of our hands when we had it ſure? Shall we contribute the Liquor of our Veins to facilitate their Progreſs, which ought to be ſo redoubted by this Nation, and ſo become inſtrumental towards the erecting of a *Coloſſus* which muſt certainly tread us under foot with the weight of it? All theſe Conſiderations, which I ſubmit to your Prudence, oblige me to conclude, That there being no Part to be taken in this War which is not deſtructive; the beſt will be to take no Part, but ſit ſtill, and obſerve how

the

the Game is play'd, and in the mean time to provide for the repairing our Revenues, and quieting of Diſorders at home, by conciliating and re-uniting the minds of the People, the Re-eſtabliſhment of Commerce, and to put our ſelves into ſuch a Condition, that the Conqueror may not be able to make a wrong uſe of his Victory to our prejudice. And in the mean time, not to remain altogether Idle in the common Danger of *Europe*, we may contribute our endeavours to obtain a Peace, and by a happy Accommodation ſtop the courſe of theſe Conqueſts, which give us ſuch juſt Jealouſie.

He had ſcarce made an end of ſpeakieg, when a little murmur aroſe among the reſt of the Conferrers, which made me conceive that they did no wayes approve of what he did urge. Wherein I found that I was not deceived neither; becauſe he which ſat right over againſt him anſwered him preſently after this manner.

If Peace were a Benefit which alwaies did depend upon our own Choice, and

if War were not, ordinarily ſpeaking, a Miſchief as neceſſary as the other is; the Queſtion which we do treat of now might eaſily be reſolved, and would not require any longer deliberation. But it is not enough to conſerve Peace, to have a pacifick Spirit, if our Neighbours likewiſe be not of the ſame diſpoſition towards it; which in effect is to reckon without the Hoſt, by founding the hopes of our future Quiet, barely on the promiſes of our own Moderation; ſince thoſe who are the moſt in love with Peace are oftentimes involved in the oppoſite Agitation, whether they will or no, by ſome violent motion of Fortune; and ſo frequently ſtumble upon War in the Flight which they make from it, and thus ſuffocate the Peace by too much avoiding War.

I do avow that the Reaſons which were alledged before could not be anſwered, if he who did ſo well deduce them were able to aſſure us upon good grounds, that in keeping our ſelves Neuters in this War of the *Low Countreys* we might be ſheltered from the ſtorm of another

another War, both in the preſent and the future tenſe of ſuch Viciſſitudes; or peaceably and long injoy ſo happy a Tranquility, which makes him believe that we ought to deſpiſe, for that ſpeculation, all manner of uſeful occaſions which Fortune doth daily offer unto us. But in truth, my Lord, Would you venter to be Caution thereupon to the State, and pawn your Faith to the Kingdom and your Honour concerning the Event? For my owu part, I hold you to wiſe and too quick-ſighted, to imagine meerly on the preſumption of unſolid hopes, that there can be the leaſt ſhadow or colour of ſafety remaining for us, if one of theſe two Monarchies which are at this time engaged in a War ſhould fall under the abſolute power of the other, or if they do re-nnite again by an Agreement, in which poſſibly, as we have handled the matter, we may very well not be comprehended. In caſe you'l avow this Truth, which all the World knows to be ſo, it follow that you muſt grant, that all thoſe Inconveniencies which were already alledged to to keep us out

all

all kinds of Engagement are not longer valid, when there is an indiſpenſable Neceſſity, and the Welfare and the Safety of the State are at ſtake.

I ſhall not enlarge my ſelf hereon, to repreſent unto you that our Predeceſſours ever held this to be a fundamental Maxim of their Conduct, to hold the Balance equal between theſe two Great Monarchies, and that on which ſide ſoever they turned the Scales, Victory did uſually follow that Counterpoiſe, which never failed to put things into that juſt Temperament that preſerves the Health of this Realm. By which means in ſome ſort they made themſelves the Arbitrators of Chriſtendom, becauſe by affording their Help unto one of the two Parties, they became in effect Maſters over them both: by ſtill keeping one of them at their Devotion, and in our Dependency, through the proſpect of thoſe Succours which they do continually need from hence; and the other, with the apprehenſion of this Aſſiſtance. For thus the *Engliſh*, what with the force of their Arms, and the power of Arbitrating in Treaties,

Treaties, have alwayes been the Law-givers to the Succeſs both of their Friends and their Enemies, by holding within the palms of their hands the Reſults of War and Peace, finding both in the one and the other thoſe Advantages and Safeties which this Nation moſt deſired.

But laying aſide theſe old abſolete Maxims, from which notwithſtanding wiſe men will not willingly depart without the preſſure of ſome invincible Neceſſity, to come to the Circumſtances of the preſent time; It is evident that the War of the *Low Countries* cannot poſſible terminate otherwiſe than by the Fall and Oppreſſion of one of the two Parties, or by an Accommodation made betwixt them. If they do agree, and that *England* hath no ſhare in the Treaty, Who will aſſure us that they'l not unite for our Ruine; or at leaſt, *France*, which cannot remain long without War, will not turn their Arms againſt us? But if *Spain* falls, we ſhall then be like Dancers of the Ropes that have loſt their Counterpoiſe, and ſo are ready to tumble down

down every ſtep they make. What good opinion ſoever we have of *France*, it cannot be denied, notwithſtanding, that in this Caſe, after the *French* have triumphed over *Spain*, they will be Maſters over our Fortune too; and that our being thus muſt intirely depend upon their Moderation. For, Gentlemen, do you think that we can take reſt ſecurely upon ſo weak a Foundation as the Giddineſs of their Charity is? ſince 'tis certain that the *moſt Chriſtian King* hath too much Ardour and deſire of Glory to dwell in Idleneſs at home, after ſuch a Conqueſt. And therefore, ſeeing his Dominions and Reputation notably increaſed, he will form to himſelf new *Idea's* of enlarging the bounds of his Empire both by Sea and Land, according to the knowledge which we have of the divers Inclinations of his Court; whereof ſome will put him on to become Maſter of the Commerce of *Europe*, and employ thoſe vaſt Treaſures he hath heaped together in order to that Deſign this way; others, to engage him in the finiſhing of his Conqueſts over all the *Low Countreys*; and

and ſome likewiſe, to begin by us to open the Path to the Subduing of all other States which may probably oppoſe this Deſign. So that which advice ſoever of theſe he doth embrace, 'twill be equally dangerous as to us here, and perpetually oblige us to ſtand upon our Guard, with the Burthen of a continued Expence on our backs, as well as the Incommodities of a War, though we ſeem to be in Peace with him.

On this Poſition then I ſay, that the worſt Party for *England* that can be taken, whether by choice or neceſſity, is that of ſitting Neuters. By uniting with *Spain* we do follow our ancient Maxim and Intereſt, which hath ever been ſucceſsful to this Nation, which is, to be ſtill Maſters of the Balance betwixt theſe two Monarchies, as I urged before. Should we therefore embrace the Party of *France*, we may hope for a conſiderable portion in the Spoils of *Spain*. And both in the one and the other caſe we ſhall find our Surety and other Advantages in the Treaties of Peace which ſhall be made. But by remaining Neutral we

muſt

muſt needs equally offend both; and ſo cannot eſchew being expoſed friendleſs to the Reſentments and the Ambition of the Conqueror, as well as the Scorn and the Reproaches of all the reſt of Chriſtendom, for having inſipidly abandoned our proper Reaſon of State, without being either good or wicked in a matter of ſuch univerſal Concernment, whereby the name of *Engliſh-men* will remain ſo much in the Oblivion of *Europe*, that no body will ſcarce remember there is ſuch a Nation in the World; excepting only thoſe who have a mind to Conquer us.

I read in the Scripture, ſo baſe a Character of none as of them who are *neither hot nor cold*: And able Stateſmen have alwayes reproved this kind of Tepidneſs or Half-conduct, to be both unuſeful and dangerous. *Media via nec Amicos parat, nec Inimicos tollit.* Wherefore *England* muſt of neceſſity either preſerve the *Low-Countryes*, againſt the Uſurpation of the *French*, which is our Bulwark; or raiſe a new Fence, that ſhall ſhelter us from being Conquered.

To preſerve the firſt then, *Spain* muſt be aſſiſted from hence; and to make a new Rampart, we muſt divide the Spoil with *France*. Experience hath ſufficiently ſhewn us, that our Ports are not inacceſſible; and Reaſon demonſtrates, that thoſe can never be ſecure from the like Attempts, but by keeping a powerful Fleet out at Sea, that we may be abſolute Maſters there. 'Tis a Maxim alſo which admits neither of exception nor diminution, That a well-governed Kingdom is obliged to arm when War is kindled in the Neighbourhood. And though we ſhould reſolve to take part neither with the one Intereſt nor the other; yet we muſt be in a Poſture to hinder the Torrent from coming upon our Land, that ſo the Conquerour may not have a mind to extend his Conqueſts hitherwards. Here then is the Charge of Arming, which on this Conjuncture is inevitable, the equipping of a Fleet, and raiſing of Souldiers to be mutually entertained at the Charge of the People, if we do not ſpeedily take ſome Party; and all this Expence without Glory, or hope to get

any fruit by ſo unprofitable a Counſel, wherein our Souldiers will never learn the Diſcipline of War, or extract any Utility from ſuch Prizes, as being uncapable after this manner to ſhare in the Booty, or in the Victories and Treaties of Accommodation, according to their ſeveral events. Whereas by taking part either with *Spain* or *France*, the Charge would be much leſs, becauſe he whom we aidwould largely contribute towards it; and the Prizes gotten at Sea might help to diſcharge the Expence both of the Naval and the Land-Forces. And thus would our Souldiers be exerciſed, and our Nation make a noiſe again abroad, and regain the Reputation which we have of late but too ignominiouſly loſt in the World. For when our men ſhall be trained up daily in ſtrict Diſcipline beyond Seas, we ſhall by this means eſtabliſh a Seminary of good and able fighting men at the Coſt of others, which will be the firmPillars of theParty, and render us conſiderable in the eyes of all our Neighbours. Beſides, this Courſe may be a vent ſo to diſcharge the Realm

of

of ill humours,& a great company of Idle perſons, which now, being without Employment, are a burthen to the Publick, and who one day are capable too of diſturbing the domeſtick Tranquillity of the State: whereas, on the contrary, what Succeſs ſoever this War ſhall have, we ſhall alwayes find our Accompt in the end of an Accommodation, whereof, being thus prepared, we cannot fail of having the principal Benefit and part.

All theſe Conſiderations then ſeem unto me to be ſo convincing, that they do oblige me abſolutely to condemn the Opinion of Neutrality,as inconſiſtent with our Glory, Safety, and Fundamental Reaſons of State; by concluding poſitively, that we ought to lend an ear to thoſe Propoſitions which ſhall be made unto us from all Parties, and embrace thoſe which ſhall be found to be moſt agreeable and convenient to the Intereſt of the Kingdom. And in the interim, to be the more conſidered by both theſe great Parties, and better aſſured againſt all manner of Attempts; my Advice is, That without any longer loſs of time, a

ſtrong Fleet ſhould be preſently got ready; and that as many dayes as we have to ſpare before the next Campagne, ſince now every hour is precious that is not well ſpent as to this purpoſe, may be employed to render us henceforwards neceſſary unto them whoſe Cauſe we ſhall reſolve to embrace, and as formidable to thoſe againſt whom we intend to declare: ſo that on both ſides we may be the Commanders of the whole affairs, and give it reſpite or motion by the ſole Rule of the Intereſts of *England*.

After that he had ſpoken thus, I did obſerve by the Countenance of the other two perſons that had not yet ſpoken, that this Diſcourſe did not diſpleaſe them; wherefore without any farther reflexion, one of them briskly began to ſpeak to this effect:

Your Reaſons, ſaid he, are ſo convincing, that I do not only render my conſent unto them without any Reply, but mean to make uſe of them to ſerve as the *Baſis* and Foundation of that Edifice which I have a long time meditated upon, in order to the fundamental Maxims

of

of State of this Nation. Therefore, without more ceremony or delay, I ſee that we muſt act, and take one of the two Parties. For any other Counſel would be dangerous and deſtructive, by expoſing of us to a thouſand Inconveniencies, which all the humane Prudence imaginable cannot be capable of preventing or avoiding in proceſs of time. I remain alſo agreed with you, that in the choice of which Party we are to take, we ought not to conſider more than juſt what our own Intereſt properly is, which is the Rule of that Conduct of Monarchis, that, as the Soul and the Spirit vivifying the whole Figure before us, gives it motion in the Body of the State.

It reſts then to form the Conſequences upon theſe Principles, and decide which of the two Parties is the moſt convenient. *France* offers Roſes unto us; *Spain* nothing but Thorns. The firſt preſents us with a Scheme of Conqueſts without Dangers; the laſt with a proſpect of Dangers without Profit. The one invites us to be their Companions of aſſured Victories, of which they have already

beaten the way; the other doth ſolicite us and implore our Aid only to help them out of the mire, without any other Benefit than, as the old Proverb ſayes, *There's your labour for your pains*, at the price of our Blood and Lives. If we ſhall engage in the Aſſiſtence of *Spain*, in ſuccouring them we run a *Riſco* of being loſt our ſelves, without yet being able to re-eſtabliſh them: But by joyning with *France*, we ſhall partake of the Spoils with them, which we can never by force be able to take out of their hands; ſince the Progreſs of *France* is now arrived at ſuch a point of Effect, that all our Powers combined together are not ſufficient to ſtop it; and then both our Reſiſtences and Succours will ſerve but to ruine the *Spaniards* the ſooner, and bring the Vengeance of the *French* upon our own heads. And if *Spain* comes to ſink under the weight of the War, all the Burthen of that Fall centers upon *England* alone. In fine, 'tis agitated therefore ſingly as to this particular, Whether we will needs chuſe to embark in a Veſſel ſo driven with ſtorms, or in a

Ship

Ship which ſails at eaſe with full Sails, ſeconded with the favourable Gales of Fortune.

But in caſe all theſe material Objections cannot divert us from engaging in the ill Fortune of the *Spaniards*, let us ſee on what Terms at leaſt we can aſſiſt them uſefully. If we ſhall ſend Troups into the *Low Countreys* to their Aid, 'tis, in effect, to overwhelm them by the very weight and charge of thoſe Succours, and ſacrifice ſo many of our own Subjects to Famine and miſery, as we do thus ſend Souldiers unto them; becauſe they have neither Countrey enough left to Lodge them in when they come thither, nor the Means to Entertain them after once they are there.

If we ſuccour them meerly by Sea, that kind of help will not hinder *France* from taking of their Towns in the mean time one by one; and ſo though we ſhould a little incommodate *France*, we ſhall not eaſe *Flanders* at all, and ſuch an Aſſiſtence will in concluſion prove none, becauſe 'tis an Application of the Plaiſter too remotely, and on the

wrong ſide of the Wound.

If then the Loſs of the *Low Countreys* be inevitable let us do what we can, were it not much better that we ſhould have our ſhare in the Parcels of ſo great a Shipwrack, than to ſuffer *France* to ingroſs them all to themſelves? ſince, uppoſing that we do divide Booties with the *French* on this occaſion, the Places which by this means muſt neceſſarily fall into our hands will be ſo many new Bulwarks to *England*, which may ſhelter us for the future againſt their vaſt Deſigns, of which the Partiſans of *Spain* make a Chimærical Monſter, to intimidate the *Engliſh* from taking part with their beſt and propereſt Intereſt in the Caſe. But when once we are entred into a Communion of Conqueſts with the *French*, the ſubduing of *Flanders* will ſerve us as Ladders to arrive at other Projects by, wherein we may probably hope to find our Profit and Satisfaction mutually together, as well as the Pleaſure of a juſt Revenge. I ſet aſide he Conqueſt of the *Indies*, which we could not fail to encompaſs, whil'ſt

France

France doth hold all the Forces of *Spain* in play both by Sea and Land, and ſo occupied, that they'l never be able to retain what they hold in the *New World*, no more than that remainder of Territories which yet they ſtand poſſeſſed of nearer hand.

Wherefore as to what regards the Intereſt of this Kingdom, what I have laſt urged methinks might ſuffice to make you of my Opinion. And if we do impartially conſider that of the *Royal Family*, What can be more important and convenient for it, than to have at their Devotion a neighbouring Power hard by which is ſo Formidable, and that is able to protect them in a few hours from all manner of Revolutions that they may (and perhaps not without cauſe neither) apprehend at home, by thus commanding both the Treaſures and the Armies of *France* whenever they ſhall have any need of them, to put a Bridle in the mouths of all ſuch as do ſeek to check their Authority?

I avow that our propereſt Intereſt were to hold the Balance equal between

Spain

Spain and *France*, if we could; but we ſhould then have thought ſooner of that whil'ſt theſe matters were in a condition to be diſputed: For at preſent, the Weight of the Caſe inclining totally to one Side, ſo that we can no longer oppoſe *France* with *Spain*, as a Barricado againſt their Deſigns, we muſt now think how to become our ſelves the Counterpoiſe of *France* and the Defence of *Europe*, by eſtabliſhing of our Power beyond Seas on ſolid Foundations, that all other Princes may conſider us hereafter as the only People who are capable of reſiſting the Deſign of the *Univerſal Monarchy*; and ſo as *France* it ſelf may not be able impunitively to thwart *England* in this Reſolution, becauſe then our Safety will be much more firmly ſettled by our own ſtrength than with the force of others; and all thoſe who apprehend the Progreſs of *France* will conjoyn with us, and become tyed to the Fortune of *England*, as they would be at this inſtant to *Spain*, if they ſaw that Monarchy in a Condition to be able to maintain them.

So

So that all thoſe Reaſons do oblige me to conclude, that we muſt no longer heſitate on this point of taking part with *France*, and accept of thoſe advantagious Offers which the *French* make unto us, both in reſpect of the publick good of Chriſtendom, as well as our own particular ſecurity; ſince by being united to them in a Knot of ſuch inſeparable Conditions, and on a Conjuncture of Affairs, becauſe of which they dare refuſe us nothing that we ask, what need we fear from the oppoſite Conjunction of any other parties?

All the Aſſiſtents at this Conference began to expreſs Indignation againſt this part of his Diſcourſe, and ſhewed by their Unquietneſs all the while that he ſpake thus, that they had much ado to keep from interrupting of him, or to refrain from anſwering Tumultuouſly, before that he had made an end. But as they offered to reply in heat all at once, to deliver their thoughts on this ſubject, the Maſter of the Houſe, who had not yet delivered his ſenſe to the Company, broke ſilence, and with a little

ſmile

ſmile, which had ſomthing in it grave, and ſcornful, dexterouſly intermingled together, addreſſing himſelf to him who had ſpoken with ſo much length juſt before, held on the Debate as follows.

I know your prudence, my Lord, too well (ſays he), and your Lordſhip's diſintereſſed zeal for the good of the State, to believe that you can mean ſeriouſly what you have urged on the behalf of *France*; but rather am perſwaded, (and that eaſily too) that with an ingenious Artifice you have thus diſguiſed your own true Sentiments of this Caſe, the better to penetrate into the bottom of ours, and ſo give opportunity to ſee clearlier through all the Reaſons and the Doubts which may be formed there upon touching this Matter, of which we do now treat; ſince the truth of any Argument doth never ſo well appear and endure the light, as when it is ſifted to the very root, and that the Reflexion thereof is exalted by the oppoſition of the contrary ſenſe. So that in combating with your

your Opinion, I ſhall ſtill think that we doe not diſagree, but rather to diſſent in the Expoſition of a vain Phantaſm, which you erected for ſport ſake to divert us, and give the Company Recreation.

Allow me then to tell you, that this project, upon which you have thus exerciſed the acuteneſs of your wit with ſo good a Grace, is both unprofitable and Chimærical, no leſs than ſhameful and unjuſt, and ruinous towards *England* to all intents aud purpoſes whatſoever: whereas the deſign of ſuccouring *Spain* is facil, honourable profitable neceſſary, and ſuitable to the Fundamental Maxims of our State. And if you pleaſe to afford me never ſo little attention, it will not be difficult for me to prove unto you very clearly according to your own Judgment, what I ſhall propoſe of this nature; that we ſhall perfectly accord in one and the ſame Reſult, and convince you fully of the truth thereof.

The Deſign which you mention, is of the like nature, that it were to demoliſh

moliſh an old ſtrong Edifice, to build a new Caſtle in the Air; or like his, who, to renew his youth, conſented to be cut into pieces, and put his ſeveral members into an Alembick of Glaſs. To follow your Counſel then, we muſt alter the whole Conſtitution of our Politicks, form innovated Intereſts and Forreign Maxims, by turning all things upſide down, even from the Accidents to the very *Genius* of the Nation, and diſtil more modern Bloud into the veins of the people than that which they have hereditarily received from Father to Son. But let us, I beſeech you, examine on what Ground, and with what Materials this new Edifice is to be raiſed. That Earth which you have propoſed unto us to make it out of, is a moving ſort of Sand, or a Floating Iſland, in which we can never fix on any firm Bottom. 'Tis upon *France* that you would have us eſtabliſh our Fortune, to found a power which one day may counterbalance the power of the *French*, or at leaſt ſhelter us from their vaſt Deſigns. Nay, you will needs have *France* made the Inſtrument

Inſtrument of a greatneſs in a Neighbour, which they ought to ſuſpect, if they be not beſotted by ſo putting *England* into a ſtate to be able e're long to ſtop their progreſſes, and erect a Bulwark in us againſt themſelves. As if *France*, that is our hereditary Enemy, and hath ſo often tried what we are able to do againſt the Enlarging of their Empire; who have graven deep in their hearts the injury of the Title which (to their ſhame) *England* carries in all publick Treaties, and her Trophees in reference to that Crown; this very *France*, which hath no greater deſire than to take the Dominion of the Sea from us, and the precedency in Commerce, will help us (as you believe) to conquer the *Indies*, in which one third part of his Realm is intereſſed, and of which they do ſuck away all the Marrow with the ſemination of their Baubles, by the ill husbandry of the *Spaniards*; She who juſt now comes from Joyning with our Enemies againſt us, after ſhe had firſt contrived how to broach the Quarrel between *England*,

and

and the States of the *United Provinces* under divers falſe motions; who ſnatched the Victory out of our hands, when we were morally certain of beating the *Dutch*; who reduced the Biſhop of *Munſter* to a neceſſity of ſeparating from us in this War, after that he had received our Aſſiſtence in large ſums of Money; debauched *Denmark* from our party; hindred the *Swedes* to arme in our favour, and contrived the whole Fabrick of that Affront which we received in the River of *Thames*: Can you, after all theſe demonſtrations of the Rancour which they bear in their hearts againſt *England*, be ſo uningenuous as to believe that the *French* will make a Bridge for us on the other ſide of the Sea, as ſincerely intending by this means to make us participate of their conqueſts with them, or ever to unite in a ſound Amity with our Intereſts? For God's ſake then diſabuſe your ſelf, as ſoon as you can, out of this groſs Errour, if it be ſo that it hath got the leaſt Fixation in your mind; ſince you cannot cordially reaſon thus, or have the

the leaſt hope of ſuch an Incongruity in the Reaſon of State of other Nations, without conceiving at the ſame time that the *French* have loſt both their wits and Judgement; of which yet there is no great reaſon why we ſhould think, as they have handled us in the matter of Negotiations of late: for therein I am ſure that we do find them to have more than common ſenſe.

France indeed will be glad to have us for the Inſtruments of their Ambition, but never for Companions of their Glorie, or Rivals to their Greatneſs. The *French* do, I confeſs, ſeek to make uſe of us to pull the Cheſnut out of the Fire, to ſave the burning of their fingers; but when that is done, the *French* will not endure that we ſhould eat any bit of the Kernel. And the work which they do now make for us, both at home and abroad, is ſo incompatible with our Intereſt and Deſigns, as well as their own, that their profeſſions towards us at this time cannot poſſibly be ſincere; except they be grown ſo kind on a ſudden, as to over-

throw all their Fundamental Laws, and in favour of *England* change the the whole face of their Deſigns which they have hitherto bin forming upon *Europe*.

They pretend that the *Low-Countreys* are entirely fallen to them by the right of Devolution, which *France* hath forged to belong to its ſelf. Then are all thoſe Provinces by conſequence united to the *French* Crown, nor can their King divide or alienate any part of them.

If this be true, to our advantage, though he would never ſo fain, but that it muſt be ſubject ſtill to return again to their Tribunal, they have annulled the *Renunciation* of the *Infanta* of *Spain*, and thereby have formed a Right to the ſucceſſion of that Monarchy, in caſe the young King ſhould come to fail of a Succeſſour. So that the moſt-Chriſtian King can give us no ſhare in the diſmembring of *Spain*, without doing prejudice to a Right which he pretends to be acquired unalienably to his Crown, and

and whereof he himſelf may not otherwiſe diſpoſe.

Next, let us view the Materials which we are to have, to build this new Edifice with. Either we muſt undertake this War at our own Charge, or at the Expence of *France.* If it be undertaken at the Coſt of *France*; we muſt be their Hirelings (at beſt,) as the *Tartars* be to the *Ottomans*; and cannot move one ſtep beyond What and How they'l have us act: *France*, on theſe terms, will always hold the Bridle in our teeth, and the *Caveſſon* upon our noſes, to make us ſtop, turn and wind, in the middle of the Courſes, juſt as they pleaſe. From the very firſt moment that we ſhall grow burthenſome unto them, they have but to withdraw their Supplies, to make us fall headlong to the Ground; and then the Share which we pretend in their Conqueſts doth purely and arbitrarily depend on their diſcretion.

But if we ſhall undertake to carry on this Deſign out of our own proper Purſe, who ſhall furniſh us with the Means of doing it? Do you believe that the Par-

liament and the People will give away their Subſtance to act againſt the true Intereſts of the Realm? and that they'l Bleed, to quench the ambitious Thirſt of the *French?* or deſtroy *Spain*, from whence all the abundance of our Commerce is derived; and which even at this Inſtant grants unto us ſuch notable Advantages by a Treaty which is ſolemnly ratified?

The part which *France* doth offer us in the Conqueſts of *Oſtend* and *Neuport* is a vaſt Liberality indeed, but ſtill of other folks Goods. It would become them far better to reſtore back *Dunkirk* to *England*, which they cheated us of by Surprize; or the Town of *Callis*, wch they have diſmembred from our ancient Dominion. They take from us what is our own already, and preſent us with nothing but what is not in their power to give; becauſe they cannot beſtow either the Title or the Poſſeſſion of what they do offer in this Kind upon us; which if we will have, we muſt gain it by the point of the Sword. And this Train which they do ſhew us, is of the ſame nature

ture with that ſort of Temptations with which the Devil tempted our Saviour from the top of the Pinnacle. But do not you diſcover that this is a ſubtile Artifice to imbroil us again in a new War with the States of the *United Provinces*, who have the Intereſt to defend theſe two places as much as if either *Amſterdam* or *Fluſhing* were ſo deſigned upon? And without an abſolute Naval Victory we can never hope to conquer them; and ſuch a Conqueſt at Sea too, as ſhall put the *Hollanders* out of all manner of poſſibility to afford any Succours in this Caſe. This is a very hard bone which *France* doth caſt in for us to gnaw, whil'ſt they eat all the Marrow out of it. In fine, when the Arms of *France*, joyned to our Forces, ſhall have put us in poſſeſſion of theſe two Places; yet they'l be totally unuſeful to *England*, when *France* is poſſeſſed of all the reſt: Becauſe thus the *French* will ſhut us quite out of the whole Traffick of the *Low Countries*, and will be alwayes in a Condition to drive the *Engliſh* away from thence, unleſs we do reſolve continually to keep a

Fleet at Sea for the conſerving of them.

If this Deſign be hollow and viſionary, it is not leſs ſhameful than Airy and full of Injuſtice. We have no manner of Pretenſion on the Monarchy of Spain, nor is it our *Genius* to whet our ſpirits to form Caſtles in the Clouds of Chimærical Rights. What Glory can it be to our Arms to help to oppreſs a King in Minority, of ſix years old, by ſurprize; only becauſe we find him now to be rudely attacqued and unprovided; on a frivolous pretext, immediately after the *French* had given the Queen his Mother, and his principal Miniſters of State at *Madrid*, ſuch ſolemn Aſſurances to the contrary, as well as at *Paris*, touching the inviolable continuation of a good Peace and a ſincere Friendſhip? The manner which *Spain* hath held and acted with us newly in relation to *England*, when we were aſſaulted by three powerful Enemies at one time, ought to oblige us, at leaſt to be deaf to the artificial Allurements of *France*. For although the *French* have tryed by all the wayes imaginable

ginable, and with Offers incomparably more advantagious than thoſe which they do make to us at preſent, to the end that ſo they might have gained the Forces of *Spain* to unite with them to our inevitable Oppreſſion; yet was it never in their power to ſhake the unalterable Amity which the *Spaniſh* Nation have for us by a kind of natural Sympathy, which one knows not how better to expreſs than by the Immutability of it, whether we do oblige or diſoblige them. Would it not then be an Ingratitude totally inconſiſtent with the Honour and the Hoſpitality of the *Engliſh* temper, ſo ſoon to forget this Kindneſs; ſince at the ſame inſtant that *Spain* was the deepleſt engaged againſt *Portugal*, they did notwithſtanding openly oppoſe the Deſigns of *France* which ſeemed to the prejudice of *England*, by refuſing them (in contemplation of us, firmly and with great reſolution) Paſſage for thoſe Troups of theirs which they ſent to ruine the Biſhop of *Munſter*, our Ally and Confederate then. We cannot complain of any Injurie or Attempt wherein the *Spa-*

niards have tampered againſt *England*. No League nor ancient Treaty doth oblige us to ſecond the Deſigns of *France*; and we cannot conclude new Alliances with the *French* to this purpoſe, without directly contravening that Treaty which we have lately ratified with *Spain*. Let us ſee then what the Herald is to ſay to the *Spaniards* that ſhall be ſent to denounce War unto them on this occaſion from *England*; or with what Reaſons we ſhall be able to fill a *Manifeſto* which we would offer to the Publick, whereby to juſtifie the Cauſes of this Rupture. Wherefore I leave the Care, my Lord, to you, being that you ſeem to be the Author of this Counſel, to found it well in the point of Juſtice. But pray, ſee that you perform it better and with more grace than the Writer of the Queen of *France*'s *Pretenſions* hath done.

I ſay farther yet, That this Deſign is both prejudicial and deſtructive; and that it carries along with it moſt pernicious Conſequences, as well in the preſent time as the time to come. For from the very moment that we do break with

Spain,

Spain, our Commerce will ceaſe, with the effects of all thoſe great Advantages which the *Spaniards* have * newly granted unto us: and the Merchants of this Realm, who trade there, will juſtly be confiſcated; ſince all the Profit that we draw from thence muſt on theſe terms infallibly redound in favour of the *Hollanders*, whilſt our Arms do buſie the *Spaniards* in the *Low Countreys*; and the *French*, as they do their utmoſt againſt *Spain*, at the ſame inſtant will ſeize their principal Ports into their power, and thus become abſolute Maſters of the Commerce, by putting themſelves into a Poſture to erect a Dominion over the Sea, which we can never afterwards be able to reſiſt. Not above three years ago *France* was hardly able to ſet forth Twenty Ships, (that is to ſay, Men of War;) now they have Sixty large Veſſels, ready furniſhed and well armed, and do apply all their induſtry and pains in every part to augment the number. Could the Ghoſt of Queen *Elizabeth* re-

* By the Treaty laſt ratified at *Madrid* by the Earle of *Sandwich*, His *Majeſtie's* Embaſſadour there.

turn

turn back into the World again, ſhe would juſtly reproach us who are the Miniſters of State here in *England*, for having abandoned her good Maxims, by tamely ſuffering before our eyes a Maritime Power to increaſe, which ſhe ſo diligently kept down throughout the whole courſe of her Reign. Whereas you are ſo far from oppoſing the Growth of this Power, that you rather ſeem to deſire *England* ſhould facilitate the wayes to make it grow the faſter, and render it yet more formidable than it is, by the Acquiſition of the Sea-Ports, which in concluſion muſt infallibly bring *France* to be Miſtreſs of the Commerce of the *Indies*. All the World knows the vaſt quantity of Money and Arms which the *French* have accumulated to that End alone out of the richeſt Purſes of that Kingdom. I agree to what hath been ſaid before very prudently in this Conference, that our Power and Greatneſs doth principally conſiſt in the matter of Commerce; and therefore I conclude even from thence, by an unerrable Conſequence, that Commerce ought to be

the

the chief Object of our Jealouſie, and that we are bound to be as tender of the Conſervation of this Benefit as of the Apples of our Eyes. But then we muſt look far off how to prevent whatſoever may hinder the Progreſs of Trade, or diminiſh the abundance of this Commerce. We have nothing to fear in this particular on the accompt of *Spain*, which applies little towards Traffick, and leaveth almoſt all the Advantages thereof freely to the *Engliſh* in their own proper Ports. But if this Intereſt ſhould fall into the power of an induſtrious and active Nation, and a People covetous of Gain, as the *French* are, we are not to expect any ſhare of the Utility, or to partake with *France* therein; but rather that they will preſcribe the Law of Commerce unto the *Engliſh*, according to their own will and pleaſure. As ſoon as ever 'tis known that we do treat of Conjunction with *France*, one of theſe two things muſt neceſſarily happen: either that *Spain*, finding it ſelf uncapable to reſiſt the Union of both Forces, will ſend a Blank to the *French* King,

King to make such Conditions with them as he thinks best, by conceding unto him all their Portion in the *Low Countreys*; or that all the rest of the Powers of *Europe*, justly apprehending so terrible an Union, will joyn with *Spain* to stop the Torrent of our Designs. In the first state of the Case then, we shall quickly find our selves taken for persons deluded in this Negotiation, and *France* only gather all the fruit of the Couzenage; of which the Shame of having been so grosly cheated can only remain to us, when the whole World discerns that the desire of Prey hath prevailed with *England* above the Faith of those solemn Treaties which we have made with the Crown of *Spain*: and thus shall we obtain no other Advantage by having made such a false step, than to have facilitated the means for *France* to unite all the *Low Countreys* to that Crown without striking one Blow, to the eternal and irreparable damage of the Crown of *England*. For who can assure us, that from the same instant when we do declare unto *France* our intention to unite with them,

them, the *French*, inſtead of uniting their Party with *England*, will not rather prevail the ſooner in their Pretenſions with *Spain*, to make the *Spaniards*, becauſe of this Apprehenſion, diſpoſed to accord to whatſoever *France* ſhall demand? which is, as the old Proverb ſays, to keep the Mule at our Coſt, and hold the ſtirrup unto the *French*; or play a ridiculous part, in making uſe only of Scare-crows, and give a falſe Alarm to favour the Deſigns of others.

Next, who ſhall ſecure us that after *Spain* hath yielded, becauſe of this Apprehenſion, the *Low Countreys* to the diſpoſition of *France*, That the *Spaniards* and the *French* ſhall not then ſtreightly unite together, to be revenged of us, and bring us down? The affinity of Bloud, Religion, and the hopes which the *moſt Chriſtian King* may found to himſelf upon the Succeſſion to this Monarchy, (if the *Renunciation* of the Queen once comes to be annulled) are ſtrong Links that may very well unite them together; and the Principle of the Diviſion which is at preſent betwixt them,

them, having no other foundation but reciprocal Jealouſie touching the Equality of their Power, this Emulation will expire as ſoon as ever that *France* doth ſee *Spain* in a Condition to be no longer able to diſpute the ſovereign Arbitrage of Chriſtendom with them; and the Cauſe of their hatred being taken away, all the Effects thereof will ceaſe likewiſe. And then the common Intereſts of both will unite them in a Bond which is inſeparable any more, from whence our Ruine muſt infallibly ariſe; becauſe the Subſtance and Surety of *England* ſolely depends upon the Emulation of theſe two Powers, as the Temperament of a humane Body conſiſts in the oppoſition of the Elementary Qualities.

But what ſhall we ſay of the States of the *United Provinces*? Can we reaſonably believe that they'l remain without Motion, or that they'l not awaken at the noiſe only of this Negotiation, which we ſhall carry on with *France* to the Deſtruction of *Spain*? Since 'tis evident, they have no other courſe to take than to prevent us, but by joyning themſelves with

with *France* before we have finiſhed this Treaty, or elſe to bind their Intereſts faſt with the *Spaniſh* Crown and the Empire on the firſt occaſion. And then are we excluded from all our Pretenſions, and all the hopes of our vaſt Conqueſts, which we have fancied unto our ſelves. And in the next place alſo ſhall we be replunged into a long and dangerous War; from whence we came but juſt now, as it were, to eſcape with ſo much difficulty and damage. *France* hath yet propoſed nothing unto us directly touching the Ports of *Oſtend* and *Neuport* to be given to the *Engliſh*; and 'tis apparent as to *England*, by ſundry authentick Documents, that the *French* have no mind to treat ſeriouſly with us on this Point, unleſs that they do find us diſpoſed to unite with *Spain* and the States of the *United Provinces* for the common Defence. Whereas 'tis no leſs certain that the *French* have expreſly made the very ſame Propoſitions, and more advantagious ones, unto the ſaid States, by ſoliciting them to re-combine with *France* in order to their old Deſign

of

of dividing the *Low Countreys* mutually between each other, to the entire Excluſion both of us and the *Spaniards*, being fully agreed as to this particular at the beginning of the War paſt.

Whereby 'tis clearly to be foreſeen, that *France* conſiders us no farther than as the worſt of their Proſpects, and that the *French* will alwayes be ready to buy dearer the Amity of the States of the *United Provinces* than ours. Would it not then be a great imprudence in us, to ſerve them as Inſtruments on ſuch diſgraceful and diſadvantagious Terms, to contribute towards the engaging of the *Hollanders* to their Party? It being out of doubt, that the Jealouſie which we ſhould ſo give them of our Negotiation with *France* would be a powerful incitement to the States, to put them upon being before-hand with us in this Treaty, and cut the Graſs after this manner under our Feet. But admit all this ſhould ceaſe, I do not ſee what Meaſures we can take at this time with *France*, nor what Aſſurances or Precautions the *French* may give us in a Treaty, ſo as

to

to ſhelter *England* from the Danger of that known Maxim of theirs, which is, In all Confederations to be bound by no other Rule but their Intereſt meerly. I avow that the Rupture of the *Pyrenean Treaty* frights me, and the remembrance of their Proceeding held with us heretofore throughout all the Courſe of our late War with *Holland* hath made me ſo incredulous, that they muſt ſhew me many Miracles, and evident ones too, before I ſhall be converted to have the leaſt good opinion of the Sincerity of their Faith and Dealing.

That which you have alledged touching the Support which the Royal Houſe of *England* may particularly hope for from the Amity of *France*, is both a delicate and a dangerous Stone to ſtir. The Glory and the Safety of our *KING* doth only conſiſt in the Love of his People, and a ſtreight union betwixt His *MAJESTY* and his preſent *Parliament*, ſince He hath no other ſound Intereſt to rely upon but that of the Kingdom, having need of no other Arms or Aſſiſtence. The hearty Affections of his

Subjects and his own Royal Vertues will be as ſo many Cittadels erected to maintain his Authority; and any other project is contrary both to his Genius and his admirable Prudence. For all thoſe who ſhall dare to inſpire any other thoughts into His *MAJESTY*, will infallibly undergo the weight of his diſpleaſure, as Enemies to his Fame and Quiet. But at the Bottom of all, what help can he rationally expect from *France*, ſhould he come to need it, (which God defend) after their unworthy abandoning of the *King* his Father in his greateſt Diſtreſs, and of the *King* which now is likewiſe, when the Wheel of Fortune ran againſt them, even to the Exſtirpation of the Royal Line, had not He by whom Kings reign, wonderfully reſtored them to the Throne of their Anceſtors? It was that ſhameful Treaty which the *French* ratified with thoſe Uſurpers then, that ſacrificed *CHARLES* the Firſt to the Ambition of the Tyrant *Oliver Cromwel*, who had ſnatched the Scepter from the right Owners and Proprietors thereof.

Nay,

Nay, to ſuch a degree was the Inhoſpitability of *France* grown at that time, though his Father were thus execrably Murthered before the eyes of the *French*, our King's own Cozen-german refuſed him a Retreat that might be ſecure for his own Perſon. Therefore 'tis fit that the *Engliſh* ſhould be diſabuſed once for all, by being better informed, ſince *France* is ſo far from being aſſiſting or uſeful unto us upon this Conjuncture, that in truth they do ſeek only to increaſe our Diviſions and Troubles.

For 'tis both their Intereſt and Maxim ſo to do: which Conduct hath been exactly and hereditarily obſerved in their Counſels for many Ages together, (and newly in the laſt Civil War here) ſince all the Baits which they do preſent unto us are but ſo many Apples of Diſcord which the *French* Emiſſaries caſt up and down among us, purpoſely to embroil us with our Neighbours, or elſe with one another.

Next, let us conſider at preſent whether we ſhall find our Accompt better with *Spain*. 'Tis evident that ſolid Rea-

ſon of State doth totally incline us to leave that other way; and you cannot but all acknowledge this to be our true Fundamental Maxim, whereby we may keep the Balance *in æquilibrio*; and that our Safety doth moſt conſiſt in ſuch an *æquilibrium:* why then ſhould we ſwerve from thence out of vain hopes, or quit the Body for the Shadow? The Intereſt of Commerce no way invites us to take part with *France*: and this Truth is ſo notorious to all the people of *England*, that there is no Eloquence able to perſwade them contrary to their own Experience therein. The Cauſe is juſt and favorable: A young *Pupil unworthily oppreſſed; a Peace ſo ſolemnly and piouſly eſtabliſhed as lightly violated by a Proceſs of Cavils and Legerdemain, by a Proceeding thereupon full of Surpriſals and Violence, as well as Pretenſions unjuſtly revived after an Authentick * *Renunciation*; are ſo many voices which ſpeak to the Root of our Conſciences, to call us to that which we

*The KING of SPAIN.

* Vide *The Buckler of State and Juſtice*, Article 4.

we owe to Juſtice, Pity, good Neighbourhood, the Publick Cauſe of Chriſtendom, and our Selves. For in this matter is concerned no leſs than the Caſe of Royal Succeſſions, which *France* will needs have ſubmitted to the Cuſtoms of ordinary Citizens, and the Conſervation of that Bulwark which is common to all theſe parts of *Europe*, againſt this Torrent which threatens the whole Vicinity with a great Inundation, and the aſſuring the Tranquillity of the Chriſtian Republick againſt an unquiet Nation, that will never deſiſt from diſturbing of it until their Inſolence ſhall be abated.

The Foundation then being ſo ſolid, becauſe we ſhall in this Oppoſition have to treat with a Nation that makes profeſſion of Honour and Generoſity, which hath never yet been accuſed to be guilty of having violated any publick Treaty, and that would rather * hazzard the loſs of their Monarchy than their Reputation; the Advantage is both ſecure and conſiderable: whereas on the account of *France* we ſhall appear

* The remarkable Integrity of *Spain*.

but as little Acceſſories, and the *French* will carry us on as the Firſt Motion, only according to the rapidneſs of their Progreſs, by applying us meerly in the courſe of their Game to their own Ends: and thus ſhall we become the Miniſters of their Ambition, and be made uſe of like a pair of Stairs, on which they do mean to tread in order to their obtaining the *Univerſal Monarchy*. In fine, their Intereſts, if that we are ſtill predeſtinated to be thus groſly deluded, muſt be the Rule of ours, and our future Conduct too and Operations. But in taking part with *Spain* we ſhall be the Arbitrators of Peace and War, and enabled to give the whole weight unto the Reſolutions of each Party. Then will *France* conſider us with terrour and the apprehenſion of what our Arms may do, and *Spain* by the addition of our Succours. If we do deſire Conqueſts, we cannot hope for more lawful ones, nor eaſier Victories, than to re-unite by this means our ancient Dominion in *France*, which have formerly been diſmembred from the Crown of *England*. But if we ſhall limit

limit our Deſigns to the ſole eſtabliſhment of a Peace, we may find the Accompt both of Glory and Safety likewiſe therein: ſince it appears by authentick Letters of *Monſieur de Lionn*'s writing, that *France* is reſolved to be content with Reaſon, as ſoon as ever they do ſee *England* fixed to joyn with *Spain* and the States of the *United Provinces*. So that 'tis in our choice whether to make an advantagious War, or procure an honeſt Peace, at the firſt appearance of our preparations in Arms. Whereas, on the contrary, 'tis evident by the Interception of the aforeſaid Diſpatches, that they will deſpiſe all manner of Offices and Mediations that are not Armed, but rather purſue vigouroufly their Courſe whither Fortune ſhall drive it on, ſo long as they do meet with no powerful Obſtacles in the way.

Therefore, becauſe you ſeem to believe that *Spain* is reduced to ſo low a Condition, that our Relief would be altogether unuſeful to them, and ſerve for nothing but to bring down the Vengeance of *France* exaſperated upon us; for God's ſake, cure your ſelf of this

Pannick fear as ſoon as you can. 'Tis *France* endeavours to erect a formidable Power, if ſhe finds no Oppoſition in the approaches thereunto; and *Spain* probably muſt ſink under the burthen, unleſs that Crown be ſuccoured: though it is as true alſo, that the Miſchief is eaſily to be prevented, if Remedies be applied thereunto in due time, and before that the Inconvenience root it ſelf too deep. All the Advantage which *France* hath gained in this laſt Campaign, is no more than an effect of their Addreſs, and the over-grown Credulity of *Spain*, rather than of their Valour and Power. All the Places which they have conquered in *Flanders*, are but great Countrey-Towns, where the People being ever the ſtrongeſt, he that is Maſter of the Field carries always the Keys of them at his Girdle, to enter when he pleaſes; and the winning of one Battel recovers them back again.

France hath conſtantly yielded in every thing where ſhe hath found a real Reſiſtence, without gaining any thing beyond what the fright of an incommodated Multitude hath holpen them to

acquire

acquire by ſuch a Surprizing Invaſion. *Spain* hath yet great reſorts to recur unto, provided only they can gain time, and the means of making them meet together, and thus recover their Spirits. We know that ſhe hath made Contracts for conſiderable ſums of Mony, and that the *Spaniards* are now about to put themſelves in a way to be able ſhortly to withſtand the ſtrongeſt Shocks of this War: and by the litle Diverſion of the Forces of *France* which we may make without any prejudice to *England*, we can certainly put *Spain* into a Condition of attaquing the *French*, as well as of defending it ſelf, and ſo ſhall we reduce *France* into a neceſſity of demanding peace. *Spain* is not unprovided of Friends nor Allies. The Emperour doth already make a great ſtep in favour of the Circle of *Burgundie*, by taking of it intirely under his protection, as a Member of his Body. The States of the *United-Provinces* are not aſleep neither as to their own proper Intereſts upon this Conjuncture; and after having tried in vain the ſweeter waies of appeaſing the Tempeſt, they will not abandon

don themſelves on ſo preſſing an Occaſion, being that they do ſee well enough their Safetie depends abſolutely upon their Reſolution. We know that they deſire a ſincere Alliance with us, and that they would make all the progreſſes neceſſary towards it, could they but diſcern in us any real diſpoſition not to reject the Offer. *Sweden*, which is weary to ſerve but as an Inſtrument to the Intereſts of *France*, to the prejudice of their own Affairs, will no-doubt alſo follow our Motions: and the moſt part (whom rather Fear than Love doth tie unto the Motions of *France*) will queſtionleſs take off the Mask, as ſoon as ever they ſhall ſee a conſiderable Power on foot to Protect them: *France* is a Body replete with ill humours, which will eaſily degenerate into an univerſal Corruption, when the *French* are never ſo little ſhaken. The Jealouſie alone which our Fleet will give them, muſt needs oblige them to employ the better part of their Troops to furniſh their Maritime Coaſts; and conſequently render them the weaker every-where elſe. Beſides, it is plain that

in

in this laſt Campaign, in which they thought to ſwallow all up at a bit, they made all the Force that they were able, and yet were not able notwithſtanding to bring into the Field above Fourty thouſand men, after having drawn out of their Garriſons and the Proviſion of their Towns all the Strength almoſt that they had there, whereby their Frontiers were left naked. Judge then to what point they'l be reduced, when they'l be put both to furniſh their Places on all ſides, and divide their Troups too, in *Alſatia*, *Italy*, the County of **Roſſillon*, and *Flanders*; and that in all theſe Countries they'l meet with Enemies to fight againſt, as well as a multitude of Male-contents at home, no leſs formidable within the Center of their own proper Bowels. For thus they can build no longer upon the ſtrength of their Army, which is deſtroyed very near already by Labour, Sickneſs, Diſeaſes, and want of Pay. Wherefore they muſt begin anew, and with freſh charges raiſe more men, becauſe the ill uſage which their Troups have received doth render them ſo barren of Souldiers, that

* or *Catalonia.*

that they are compelled to ſeek Recruits and as it were beg Supplies, with vaſt ſums of Money, from other States. And this Imaginary Fountain of Treaſure of theirs, which here is thought to be unexhauſtible, will be found to have a bottom when our Fleet doth diſturb their Commerce, the Credit which till then they may get with the Partiſans, by means of oppreſſing the people, with Tax upon Tax, will fail. The men of buſineſs and the Natives, being preſſed to unſupportable extremities, will quickly either caſt off the yoke, or ſink under the burthen and the weight of thoſe Impoſitions. Their incapacity to hold out any longer is well enough ſeen, by the impoſſibility wherein they now find themſelves to make good what they have promiſed the *Portugueſes*, whoſe Friendſhip hath been formerly ſo neceſſary unto them. And if *Spain*, as 'tis hoped that it may do, once ſhall take a reſolution to be delivered of this inteſtine War with *Portugal* by ſome Accommodation, the *Spaniards* will ſoon be in a condition of being uſeful

* Which is the ſame thing as our Banquer & Farmers of the Cuſtomes.

to

to their Allies, & feared by their Enemies. But if we do ſuffer the Deſigns of *France* to paſs by undiſcovered, & impunitively to permit them to conquer the *Low Countreys* towards the total oppreſſion of *Spain*; then I cannot but avow that *France* thus will be moſt terrible unto us. And in caſe at preſent we are afraid of drawing their Revenge on our heads, then ſhall we have much juſter cauſe to apprehend the future effects of their Ambition. Wherefore at the Bottom of all theſe Reaſons, it ſeems to me that by the ſame Principle of apprehenſion which you have of the *French*, we are obliged to oppoſe theſe Progreſſes of theirs, which if not ſtopped would yet render them more redoubtable.

If ſo be that we do fear them in the Field, having ſo many Friends that do tender their Alliance unto us, our fear were much more juſtifiable, if after the rejecting of all thoſe Offers, we alone were expoſed to their mercy; or that our moderation could exempt us from their out rages, but on the contrary, rather give the *French* better Conveniencies of putting theſe Violences in Execution

cution, ſhould ſuch an inſipid Counſel prevail; for they'l never conſider us farther than we do make our ſelves Conſiderable. They have Printed Books of their Pretenſions to *England*. Experience teaches us (even to this day) that 'tis enough with them to ground a War, without giving them any other cauſe of Hoſtilitie, That we have * Kingdoms belonging to this Monarchy which may very well fit their Deſigns; which is enough to invite the *French* to attaque them whil'ſt *England* is weak.

* *Scotland* and *Ireland.*

Hiſtory likwiſe doth ſhew us, how that all our Alliances with the houſe of *Burgundie* have ſtill been glorious and uſeful, and all thoſe with *France*, unfortunate & prejudicial. 'Tis ever more dangerous to go out of the beaten Road, to travel through By-lanes, unknown and dark untried Paths.

You'l eaſily agree with me, that the Union of the *United Provinces* with *France* is the thing of all others which we ought the moſt to apprehend as fatal to our Crown: and therefore, by conſequence, nothing can be more ſafe for

for *England* than to diſunite them. Heaven furniſhes us now with an occaſion of doing that, which we ſhall never be able to recover again, ſhould it be neglected: & if we do ſuffer it to ſlip away we ſhall bring that Republick into a neceſſity of tying this fatal Knot with *France* ſtronglier than ever it was faſtned before. This Union therefore above all others muſt be the Object of our Care, as it hath of late demonſtratively been the cauſe of our misfortunes.

I conclude then upon ſolid Foundations, without heſitating, That, in the firſt place, we muſt neceſſarily take part in this War, either with *Spain* or *France*: and next, that we muſt not engage blind-fold, without taking right Meaſures with thoſe who have the ſame Intereſt that *England* hath in the Caſe: thirdly, that we muſt knit our Party firmly together, and get all the Advantages we can in this Treaty with *Spain*, as well as all the Security poſſible with other States; without yet exacting from *Spain* things which are intolerable unto them, whom the loſs of the *Low-Countries* for fear of being reduced by the Exorbitancy

tancy of our Demands, may plunge into a neceſſity of according to whatever *France* ſhall require.

This Diſcourſe being ended, I obſerved by their Countenances, that the two Perſons who ſpake firſt applauded this Opinion, and that the third man was much ſhaken. They had ſome farther ſpeech together, but ſo ſoftly, that I cannot well collect the ſenſe of it: after which all the Company embraced, and gave one another their hands, with a reciprocal promiſe of ſecrecy, as well as an Union in the ſame Deſign. And thus they ſeparated each a ſeveral way, with evidence of great ſatisfaction & friendſhip. And as ſoon as ever they were gon, I ſlipped back inſenſibly again into the former obſcurity near the Bed, without being ſeen by any of the Domeſticks. And thus whilſt theſe particulars were freſh in memory, I did ſet them down in Paper, and all that I could remember of their Diſcourſe, only to ſatisfie my own Curioſity, and the Curiouſneſs of my Friends.

THE END.